



*News From*

# Maggie Brooks

## *Monroe County Executive*

**For Immediate Release**

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### **BROOKS ANNOUNCES NEXT STEP IN COUNTY'S EFFORTS TO COMBAT MEDICAID FRAUD, ABUSE AND WASTE**

**Monroe County First In State To Receive Approval To Conduct Audits**

Monroe County Executive Maggie Brooks today announced that the County is moving forward with its aggressive efforts to identify and investigate fraud, abuse and waste among providers in the Medicaid program. Earlier this year, Monroe County joined the State's Medicaid Fraud Demonstration Program, a pilot program that gives participating County governments local control over identifying these cases.

Since joining the pilot program, Monroe County has been gathering provider data to identify any "red flags" or behavior that is out of the ordinary. Monroe County received approval yesterday from the New York State Office of the Medicaid Inspector General to begin auditing and investigating these cases. Monroe County is the first county to receive approval from the State to conduct these audits. There are over 9,000 providers in Monroe County who participate in the Medicaid program.

*"This is all about protecting local taxpayers and saving local taxpayer dollars," said **Brooks**. "While it is difficult to estimate the percentage of fraud and abuse in the program, it is clear there are providers abusing the system, statewide. We are doing our part to root out any abuse here in Monroe County. By gathering local provider data over the last several months, we've been able to identify questionable claims. The next step is to audit and investigate these claims to determine if they are legitimate."*

*"Monroe County has an outstanding health care community and quality providers that are among the best in the nation. We applaud these providers for their commitment to quality patient care," **Brooks** added. "In a program this large, however, there are undoubtedly those who abuse it. Our efforts will crack down on this abuse and get our tax dollars back."*

*"The fight against Medicaid fraud and abuse demands a smart, innovative approach – new technology, new ideas, a new, tough resolve," said New York State Medicaid Inspector General **Kimberly A. O'Connor**. "That's why the Office of the Medicaid Inspector General looks forward to working with County Executive Maggie Brooks, Medicaid Czar Bill Carpenter, and Monroe County in this Medicaid demonstration program. I applaud the work that they have done and the contributions that Monroe County will make in this fight against fraud and abuse."*

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Monroe County is using two start-of-art data mining tools: VerifyNY from IBM and Muni-Minder from Salient. Both tools are designed to identify patterns of behavior that are out of the ordinary or inconsistent with similar providers. The County has partnered with The Bonadio Group, Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC) and American Quality Review (AQR) to assist in the effort. Bonadio is a recognized leader in health care auditing. CSC maintains Medicaid claims data for New York State and audits Medicare cases for the Federal government. AQR works with the New York State Office of the Medicaid Inspector General to investigate Medicaid abuse and waste.

*“At a local cost of \$152 million in 2006, Medicaid remains the single largest expense for Monroe County taxpayers. Abuse drives up the cost of Medicaid, and hurts the patients receiving care and the taxpayers who pay for the program,”* **Brooks** added.

Monroe County has taken a number of steps to control Medicaid costs and reduce waste. For example, Brooks launched an initiative last summer to encourage local physicians to prescribe generic drugs for their Medicaid patients. Embraced by the local medical community and pharmacy providers, this initiative has resulted in \$2 million in overall savings. In addition, County audits of individual recipients and strong case management continue to contribute to savings.

Brooks is also a member of the Federal Medicaid Commission. Brooks was appointed in July 2005 by U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Mike Leavitt, and is the only public official from a local government on the Commission. Brooks has become known on the Commission as “the voice of the local taxpayer”.

Brooks was joined at today’s news conference by Bill Carpenter, Monroe County’s Medicaid Czar, Kelly Reed, Commissioner of the Department of Human Services, and other partners in this effort.

Brooks noted that the State’s pilot program is the result of a collaborative effort among New York counties to push for more local control of the Medicaid program. Monroe County was an integral part of this process. It was a similar collaborative effort that resulted in the State enacting the Medicaid Cap.

*“Having local control over identifying and investigating abuse and waste in the Medicaid program is a huge win for Monroe County. It gives us some local control over a program that we’ve typically had very little control over, and that’s good news for taxpayers,”* **Brooks** concluded.

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